

Reviews

Books

Papa Married a Mormon

John D. Fitzgerald
Western Epics, 1976
298 pages, \$7.95



Papa Married a Mormon is the story of one of those "mixed marriages" against which we heard so many dire warnings in the stake conferences of Youth. Indeed, in attempting to reconcile the conflicting demands of love and religious beliefs, Papa and Mama were married four times—twice in civil ceremonies, once by Mama's Mormon bishop and finally, by Papa's Catholic priest.

First published in 1955, *Papa Married a Mormon* has been reprinted for a new generation of readers by Western Epics. It is the delightful story of the family of Tom and Tena Neilsen Fitzgerald. Papa, Tom Fitzgerald, came to Utah Territory in 1884 in search of his lost brother, Will. He found him to be the leading citizen of Silverlode, a mining camp in Southwestern Utah—a gambler extraordinary, proprietor of the White Horse saloon, the quickest draw in town, and publisher of the *Silverlode Advocate*. Eventually, Tom buys the paper from his brother and it becomes one of the few Gentile papers which is not anti-Mormon.

Nearby to Silverlode is Adenville, the Mormon settlement, where Tom meets, courts, and eventually marries Tena Neilsen, despite the bitter opposition of her family and bishop. Tom and Tena settle down in Adenville, and over the course of the next few years raise their family of five children.

Life in Adenville is uncomfortable for both the Fitzgeralds. Tom finds himself in limbo between the "rough and tumble" of Silverlode and the closed ranks of the Mormon settlement. At first ostracized by her co-religionists Mama ultimately becomes beloved in both communities because of her "midas

touch"—the ability to turn the less desirable characters of both Adenville and Silverlode into sober, industrious, productive citizens. Even fanatical Aunt Cathie who descends upon the Fitzgeralds to save them from paganism (Mormonism), is eventually softened by Mama's patient love and becomes a Mormon herself.

Indeed, both the Fitzgeralds, Mama particularly, seem too perfect to be human. The few times that Mama becomes angry, for example, follow extreme provocation and her anger always leads to a change for good in the family. The perspective of the author—that of an adoring child who is the family chronicler—is the cause of that idealized presentation. Characters in the book are polarized into "good guys" or "bad guys" depending upon how they are viewed by the family. Consequently, the reader is deprived of the opportunity to know the central characters as they are. This incomplete perspective keeps the book from being a "Mormon classic"—whatever that is.

Yet, the book has a great deal to tell us about the Mormon past. One of the most interesting aspects of the book deals with the interface between the Mormon town, Adenville, and the Gentile town, Silverlode, and its railroad-town successor, East Adenville. The Mormons grew prosperous by selling meat and produce to the miners of Silverlode, but no Gentiles from the camp were allowed into Adenville without the permission of the bishop. The mercantile aspects of Adenville go from the sublime to the ridiculous when Mama, who was unwelcome in the Mormon stores because of her mixed marriage, is forced to trade with the Jewish merchants of Silverlode, who in turn bought their goods from the Mormon merchants! There are other aspects of the Saints striving to be "in the world but not of it" with equally perplexing results. Such circumstances are not entirely foreign to contemporary Mormon-Gentile relationships either.

Packed with action and excitement, *Papa Married a Mormon* presents an interesting picture of everyday life, and

Mormon-Gentile accommodations, in Utah in the years preceding statehood. The trials and triumphs of the Fitzgeralds are portrayed with warmth and love; the reader only wishes he were allowed to see them more completely. Nevertheless, this book is a delightful experience for a reader of any age. Western Epics should be congratulated for bringing this popular book back into print and encouraged to reprint other volumes of Mormon history and literature.

Susan Taber

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The Gentile Comes to Cache Valley

A. J. Simmonds
Utah State University Press, 1976
137 pages,
Appendix, bibliography, index; \$5.00



Conflict between Latter-day Saints and their non-Mormon neighbors is one of the oldest and most overworked subjects in Utah history. *The Gentile Comes to Cache Valley* by A. J. Simmonds, special collections librarian at Utah State University, provides a new frame of reference, moving beyond polemical arguments over who was right or wrong. This pioneering study explains why one group of Latter-day Saints left the Church in the late nineteenth century and what happened when they stayed on in Utah despite their minority status. These themes unfold in a local setting that has been ably researched and reconstructed.

Utah's sectarian rivalries of the nineteenth century are usually attributed to outside forces such as the coming of the railroad and the competition that arose when Gentiles entered Mormon communities and struggled to secure a foothold. Simmonds' work is fresh in that it reminds us that the institutions of Mormonism alienated followers from within, some of whom became the Church's most vigorous adversaries. According to Simmonds, apostates formed "a Fifth Column world which—allied to the Gentile bureaucrat, merchant, missionary, and miner—had more impact on the 'Americanization' of Utah than it is possible to document."

Simmonds set out to determine why his ancestors and several hundred others left or were expelled from the LDS

Church in the Cache Valley in the 1870s. One factor was the completion of the Utah Northern Railroad in 1873, which brought the first Protestant churchmen into the area to establish missions and badly needed schools. These missionaries arrived just as some local Latter-day Saints began to bridle at efforts to consolidate Mormon businesses under a single management and to enforce the boycott on trade with Gentile merchants introduced by the Mormon hierarchy in 1869. The decision to build a tabernacle in Logan was another source of resentment, since it required the donation of labor and supplies. Tensions mounted with a murder in Logan and the lynching of the accused murderer, Apostle E. T. Benson's son Charles. When bishops and teachers quorums exerted pressure on those who resisted the Church's cooperative measures, an exodus began.

In the years that followed, these apostates flocked to the Big Range on the west side of the valley where streams and wet bottomlands encouraged independent ranching. The large grazing tracts they acquired contrasted with the small irrigated farms belonging to the Mormons, and the Episcopal, Presbyterian, and Methodist churches which drew many of their number became centers of community life. The tables of Cache election returns that supplement the text show how the Gentiles raised political opposition to the Mormon theocracy in county and state elections.

What distinguishes this book as a study in local history is its imaginative use of sources. Simmonds has drawn his information from a rich body of original manuscript material, including county, territorial, and state records that are often neglected in the writing of community and family history. Whereas it is all too common for local historians to crown their forebears with halos of veneration, Simmonds incorporates interviews and oral traditions that bristle with feistiness and pluck. In the maps, descriptions of the terrain, and illustrations of buildings erected by Cache Valley Gentiles the author conveys his appreciation of geography and material culture as meaningful historical evidence. This book could well serve as a guide to the kinds of materials available to those researching the history of other parts of the state.

Nonetheless, *The Gentile Comes to Cache Valley* leaves some questions unanswered. Unfortunately the final chapter ("Their Half of the Kingdom") does not live up to its full potential, for instead of expanding upon what made

Gentile institutions unique in their own right the author gets sidetracked into a discussion of how the Gentiles and Mormons got along with each other (not badly, after all). Many will find fault with the style and wish that Simmonds had been given more editorial guidance. It seems rather awkward that a third of the volume is devoted to biographical sketches, since the arguments presented could have been strengthened had more of this information been incorporated in the text. Still, the book makes a creative and significant contribution to Utah history.

Gail Farr Casterline

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Spencer W. Kimball

Edward L. Kimball and Andrew E. Kimball Jr.
Bookcraft, 1977
427 pages, index; \$8.95



Spencer W. Kimball

This biography of Spencer W. Kimball, co-authored by his son and grandson, is a surprisingly candid book. Based on journals, letters and sermons supplied by President Kimball and his wife, Camilla Eyring Kimball, as well as dozens of interviews and personal observations and remembrances, the authors have produced a well-balanced, interesting and readable story of the remarkable man who is now the leader of the Mormon Church. "We have tried to be candid," assert the authors, "neither omitting weakness and problems nor exaggerating strengths. Happily we were faced with no real test of our integrity as biographers, since our burrowing into the past only confirmed our personal impressions that this was a man of rare consistency, exemplifying in his private life the same virtues ascribed to the public man."

Having read the manuscript, President Kimball was concerned that an honest portrait be painted, "warts and all," while he was living, knowing that people might be more protective of his memory after his death.

The authors acknowledge the fact that "a full biography of a living person constitutes a radical assault on his privacy and that of his family," but found the Kimballs willing to undergo such exposure because of the "legitimate interest of members of the Church in the life story of their president."

The early part of this story is quite typical of many Mormon boys who were born near the turn of the century, and who lived in small Mormon towns which were dominated by the Church programs and attitudes. Yet there was a difference, for Spencer Kimball's father, Andrew Kimball, was the stake president, and his grandfather, Heber C. Kimball, had been one of the most prominent leaders of the Mormon Church. Although he never knew his grandfather Kimball, "Spencer had a consciousness as he grew up and as he received responsible challenges in the Church that his grandfather watched and approved, that in some measure the callings could be attributed to the merit and influence of Heber C. Kimball." This feeling must have made a profound impact on young Spencer, but the influence of his father, Andrew, counted the most. The son, as he matured, followed his father closely in many things—"in willingness to respond to Church callings, sense of loyalty, unquestioning faith, thrift, love of work, enthusiasm for a cause, vigor and indefatigability, firm insistence on doing right, love of people and deep concern for others in trouble." With such identifications and attitudes, even in rudimentary form, he could hardly be regarded as a typical Mormon boy.

Perhaps part of the charm of the book comes from the description of life in such a family and such a town, for the portraits are well-drawn and the remembered details are supported by journals and other documentary sources.

His missionary experiences in Missouri, followed by his whirlwind courtship of Camilla Eyring, and the frustrations resulting from his threatened induction into the army during World War I make interesting reading. His development as "a force in the community" includes his business ventures, his role as a father of a growing family, and his numerous positions in Church and civic organizations. Highlights of this period include his trip to Europe in 1937 as representative of his district to the International Rotary Convention and his service as first president of the Mt. Graham Stake. In the latter capacity, he demonstrated his leadership abilities in using the newly instituted Church Welfare Program to aid members of his stake who were forced to leave their homes when the Gila River overflowed its banks in September 1941. Because of this, he received favorable notice among the Church leaders, which may have been a factor in his call to the apostleship in October 1943.

The remainder of the book details his life as a general authority, including his spiritual struggle to gain divine confirmation of his call to this high position. It is a story of a man who drives himself beyond his own strength in his efforts to "measure up" to his responsibilities. Despite severe physical disabilities, including long sieges of boils and carbuncles, heart disease, and cancer of the larynx, Spencer Kimball continued to serve. When he was sustained as President of the Church in his seventy-ninth year, his message to his fellow members was a call to more vigorous activity. "Lengthen your stride," was the message, and he set the example by driving himself even harder.

The book is essentially a narrative with very little interpretation. Spencer Kimball's life is so filled with activities that there seems to be little time for reflection and philosophizing. One wonders if having "put his hand to the plow" he ever looked back. Camilla refused to interpret her son's illness as a punishment from God or even a test of faith. It was "a matter of infection and too little resistance; that was all." But no mention is made concerning Spencer's attitude towards this difficult episode in their lives. The authors candidly report that an apostle blessed "Eddie that he would eventually recover completely," but despite this promise and numerous other administrations and operations, Edward remained substantially handicapped. It would be interesting to know how Spencer Kimball, at that point in his life, was able to reconcile the apparent failure of faith, prayer and promises.

The book is filled with references to his being "so weary and ill" that he couldn't go on, but he did—to the point of "fatigue and near exhaustion." It would be interesting to know why he felt impelled to drive himself in this way. Did he ever reflect on his motivations? Certainly he must have, but such reflections are not included in this biography. In short, we have a detailed picture of his active life, but very little of his private thoughts.

This biography was obviously written for Church members and should be read by them. Non-members will find much of interest as well, especially if they would like to understand the Mormon way of life. Footnotes and a bibliography would have pleased scholars, but the sources are described in the preface, and editors often eliminate notes in the interest of readability and economy. Such minor

criticisms should not deter anyone from reading this remarkable biography of a remarkable man.

Eugene E. Campbell

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Theatre

Bye-Bye BYU

When Brigham Young University launches a theatre group called the "Mormon Players" in order to produce three shows a summer in repertory, what do you expect? The idea of a repertory company conjures up images of wandering players doing masterpieces of theatrical literature, changing characters on command, the zenith of quality. And adding the semi-official title *Mormon* (it must be semi-official, considering that in an area that sports Kolob Realty, Zion's Bank, and Deseret Mutual the name *Mormon* has remained sacred until now) leads one (or at least these two) to expect that there will be something uniquely Latter-day Saint about the company; perhaps the finest in *Mormon* plays will be produced; certainly the *Mormon* commitment to excellence will be exemplified, since the use of that name puts the link between the gospel and art on the line.

Alas, no zenith—instead, a nadir.

We were a bit surprised when we discovered that the season would be three such literary masterworks as *Where's Charlie?*, *Bye-Bye Birdie*, and *Kiss Me, Kate*. In a world where *Hamlet*, *Saint Joan*, and even *The Taming of the Shrew* exist, surely there was no need for such barrelscraping. But we swallowed our doubts and went to one of the shows, *Bye-Bye Birdie*, because we were familiar with the script and thought, Perhaps they will at least make a good nostalgic comedy out of it.

We were wrong.

Because, you see, our expectations of quality were too high. The actors were, after all, students, and plunged into the demanding repertory schedule of performing one play at night while rehearsing another all day, they were simply unable to cope. What suffered, of course, was their performance at night, and invariably the majority of the actors settled for the cheap laugh, the ridiculous characterization, the grab for audience approval.

But it's a comedy—surely comedy need only be funny, not believable.

True enough—with a certain type of comedy. The Three Stooges were never believable. But when the label *Mormon* is put on a company, one does hope for better, at least to avoid embarrassment, since we are also known by the same label.

Besides, great comedy is not shallow and unbelievable. The Jewish mother in *Bye-Bye Birdie* was played so broadly and phonily (new word) that it was incredible that her son would have let her rule him for so long, thereby destroying his character. Contrast that with the mother in *Barefoot in the Park*, who, while hilarious, is utterly true: everybody's mother has said those things, and under her facade we recognize a real, self-justified, frustrated woman. Under the facade of the characterization in *Birdie*? Nothing.

We are being too hard on the actors. It is not their fault. The director was Charles Whitman, who is easily the best director at BYU when it comes to drawing depth out of inexperienced actors—yet he was unable, given the circumstances, to do anything of the kind, except with Linda Cameron, the female lead, who manages (incredibly enough) a few moments of genuine pathos, particularly when she is left alone on the stage to dance, and with Robert D. Godwin, who was unfailingly honest on stage and made his nothing part into a highlight of the show. Could Whitman have done better? Of course. Even with an insipid script like *Birdie*, warmth and depth are possible, and Whitman is a capable director.

The fault lies in the conception of the entire project. A repertory schedule is simply too demanding for a university setting. If the actors are not to be paid for their work, those actors who have families or who have professional opportunities will not stick around all summer to kill themselves for a few credit hours, especially with mediocre scripts. So the actors who remain, with some exceptions, are the less stable and the less talented—certainly those without the best control of their talents. Then the grueling schedule prohibits them from taking the time to grow into their roles, and so they spend all summer working to achieve exactly nothing.

Well, not exactly nothing. The theatre was mostly full, unusual for summer. The audience, which reeked of overt rectitude, was delighted. No thoughts had been added to their minds; no questions asked. Nothing had been

demanded. And so they felt the evening well worth their while.

If the goal of the BYU theatre department was to offer onstage a Mormon version of prime-time television, they almost succeeded. We say almost, because at least *Three's Company* has a little believable lust involved, and *All in the Family* manages to be emotionally convincing now and then. What BYU's Mormon Players achieved was exactly as good as *Operation Petticoat* and *Wonder Woman*: meaningless entertainment.

But it was Mormon, and it was clean, and that is definitely enough for that vast intellectual wasteland that regards a G rating on a movie as a guarantee of "goodness" and an R rating a ticket that will send all who watch the movie directly to hell. And we suspect that the Great Minds who decided on the season for the Mormon Players knew their audience. You can't go broke underestimating the taste of the Mormon people. And in that sense, if in no other, the title *Mormon Players* was exactly apt. They know their audience at BYU. If they appeal to those who want to be moved and improved and elevated by theatre, they will have audiences of twenty people a night, all of whom will be dissatisfied with the production because BYU is not yet capable of mounting a completely superb show. But if they appeal to those who want to have some way for their conscious mind to be occupied without having any lasting effect on their lives, the theatre will be full, and by the standard that means most in theatre, as in any commercial art, the show will be a success. Because, after all, the question that they ask you at the door is, "Have you any money?"

Frederick Bliss and P.Q. Gump

Film

Equus



In ancient Greece, theatre was sacred. It was a ritual, in fact, in which the relationships between gods and men were portrayed in a way that promoted a sense of mythic identification with the characters in the play. The audience was touched by the grief of the Trojan women, or they strove with Oedipus to escape the fate the gods had prepared for him. The plays provided a cathartic outlet for an individual's anger and frustration.

Through identification with the struggles of the characters in the play, the pattern and meaning of one's own life became clearer.

Living in the secularized culture of twentieth-century America, it is sometimes easy to lose sight of theatre's religious roots. In movies, on stage, and on television, the connection between the simplistic pap we are offered and the ultimate questions of existence seems a little obscure.

But there are oases scattered through the cultural wasteland, and one of the most notable of these wellsprings of creativity is Peter Schaffer. Over the past few years his play *Equus* has provoked strong positive and negative reactions from critics and audiences alike. Its appeal has survived the perils of translation, playing to packed houses throughout Europe. And, perhaps inevitably, it has made the transition to the silver screen. The source of the play's tremendous appeal lies in its powerful portrayal of a young boy who has given himself up to the power and majesty of the horse-god, Equus. As we are pulled into the conflict between the boy, Alan Strang, and the psychiatrist who tries to rid him of his delusion, we are forced to consider the role of the transcendent in our own lives.

Equus works best as a stage production. As the lights come up on an austere, barren stage, a riveting image catches our attention: Alan Strang kneeling next to a horse, tenderly caressing it, moving up and down its body with the gentle attention of a lover for his beloved. His psychiatrist, Martin Dysart, stands off to one side commenting on the scene. Against his will, he is fascinated by Alan's fixation. And he wonders:

... I keep thinking about the horse! Not the boy: the horse, and what it may be trying to do. I keep seeing that huge head kissing him with its chained mouth. Nudging through the metal some desire absolutely irrelevant to filling its belly or propagating its own kind. What desire could that be? Not to be a horse any longer? Not to remain reined up for ever in those particular genetic strings? ... What use, I should be asking, are questions like these to an overworked psychiatrist in a provincial hospital?

The theme of transformation, of making the leap "clean-hoofed to a whole new track of being" is carried on throughout the play. And so is Dysart's sense of malaise and dissatisfaction with his own life. Alan's leap into the dark night-world of *Equus* gnaws like a

cancer at Dysart's shaky truce with his own drab reality.

Alan was sent to Dysart because he had blinded six horses at the livery stable where he worked. Dysart's professional detachment proves to be his strength and his tragic flaw. It gives him the rationality to coolly dig into Alan's psyche and not be revolted or disgusted by what he finds. But out of the tortured morass of Alan's mind comes the one thing that Dysart cannot face—commitment, worship, the sense of participation in something more important than oneself. Dysart is later driven to admit that "that boy has known a passion more ferocious than any I have felt in any second of my life."

When Alan first visits Dysart's office, he is cool and hostile. He refuses to answer any of Dysart's questions; instead he sings the jingles from television commercials. Dysart presses on and discovers that many of Alan's problems revolve around his parents. His father is the epitome of a rational, twentieth-century man: he is a socialist, self-consciously atheistic, "relentlessly self-improving," Dysart calls him. He claims to have no religious feelings, but it is all too obvious that the guidelines and standards that a church would provide have been replaced by a sort of vague, muddled neo-Puritan morality. He bans television from the house, berates Alan for not reading more and for slacking off in school, and is in general an intolerably self-righteous overlord of the household. Alan's mother, on the other hand, is a gentle and devoutly religious person. Significantly, her religious impulses are virtually the only part of her life that Frank Strang has been unable to bring under his sway. He sums up their home situation tersely: "Bloody religion—it's our only real problem in this house." Both of Alan's parents are seriously flawed individuals. His father worships at the altar of an amorphous moralism that he is unable to live up to; later in the play, Alan's climactic crisis is partly precipitated by the mutual shame that he and his father feel when they see each other at a cheap porno flick. His mother is likewise false to her professed ideals. Under her husband's attacks, her religion has degenerated into a petty thing, vindictive and judgmental. Instead of trying to help Alan solve his problems, she lashes out at him and accuses him of having succumbed to the devil's temptations.

Alan's attempts to protect himself from the conflicting demands of his parents only lead him deeper into isolation. His father forbids him to watch television,

and as a gesture of revolt he refuses to read books. His job as a clerk in a small shop gives him no satisfaction. His only release is through the religious images that he gleaned from the stories his mother read to him as a child. In Alan's mind, his mother's picture of a demanding judgmental Christ-figure has become confused with a memory of a brief, magical ride on horseback when he was six years old. One day, when Alan was at the beach with his family, an elegant young man on horseback came cantering down the beach and offered Alan a ride. For a moment, he felt the play of the horse's muscles between his thighs, inhaled the clean aroma of the animal's sweat, and experienced a freedom he had never known before. But Alan's father yanked him off the horse, down onto the sand. Despite his father's attempts to dominate the horseman, he remained above the conflict and rode away, spattering Alan and his parents with sand and water. The humiliation of his father was intimately connected with the power of the horse, and the power of the horse was confused with Alan's all-seeing God, an implacable nemesis to mere mortals.

Out of this seething goulash of traumas and fixations, Alan constructs a private theology centered on Equus, the suffering Christ-figure, the god with a chain in his mouth who bears men away into a higher plane of existence in the Field of Ha-Ha. The reference is to the Book of Job:

Hast thou given the horse strength?
Hast thou clothed his neck with
thunder? . . .
He swalloweth the ground with
fierceness and rage . . .
He saith among the trumpets, Ha,
ha! Job 39:19-25

Alan's relationship with his god is decidedly ambivalent. Adoration and worship are there, yes, but there is also an element of competition, a mutual striving for dominance. Under hypnosis, Alan tells Dysart about the ritualistic midnight rides that are his worship services:

Alan: He showed me nothing! He's a mean bugger! Ride—or fall! That's Straw Law.

Dysart: Straw Law?

A: He was born in the straw, and this is his law.

Alan's ambivalent relationship with Equus is brought to a crisis by his own awakening sexuality. He meets a girl, Jill Mason, who talks him into quitting his job at the shop in order to work with her at a nearby stable. The new job is ecstasy for Alan, of course; it is at the

stable that he begins to sneak out on his worshipful midnight rides. Before he met Jill, Alan's erotic impulses had all been sublimated into his private religion. Now, Jill competes with Equus for a place in Alan's affections. Again and again, she turns their brief, desultory conversations to sexual topics, and Alan retreats before her advances like a skittish colt. Finally she tries to seduce him in the stables, and Alan discovers he is impotent:

Dysart: (gently) What was it? You couldn't though you wanted to very much?
Alan: I couldn't . . . see her.
D: What do you mean?
A: Only Him. Every time I kissed her—He was in the way.
D: Who?
A: You know who! . . . When I touched her, I felt Him. Under me . . . His side, waiting for my hand . . .

Ashamed confused, humiliated before his god, Alan is driven to still God's mocking laughter and tear out his all-seeing eyes, as Jill runs terrified into the night.

Such are the bare bones of the play. But *Equus* gets its unique power from Dysart's contrapuntal movement away from the Normal, the Comfortable. As Dr. Dysart penetrates more deeply into Alan's neurosis, his own respectable life comes to appear shallow and trivial when compared with Alan's religious ecstasies and his dark, nocturnal theology. Finally, Dysart stands powerless, unable to face the staring eyes of Equus that he has so painstakingly revealed. At the play's end, the characters' positions have been neatly reversed. Alan is sleeping quietly, after a cathartic re-enactment of his last night in the stable. But a wakeful Dysart paces above his bed, torn by self-doubt:

Dysart: And now for me it never stops: that voice of Equus out of the cave—"Why Me? . . . Why Me? . . . Account for Me!" . . . All right—I surrender! I say it . . . In an ultimate sense I cannot know what I do in this place—yet I do ultimate things. Essentially I cannot know what I do—yet I do essential things. I stand in the dark with a pick in my hand, striking at heads!

"I need—more desperately than my children me—a way of seeing in the dark. What way is this? . . . What dark is this? . . . I cannot call it ordained of God: I can't get that far. I will however pay it so much homage. There is now, in my mouth, this sharp chain. And it never comes out."

In the course of the play Dysart becomes convinced that in destroying Alan's neurosis he is destroying his soul, and Dysart has nothing with which to replace it. Dysart's own doubts and the generally negative role of psychiatry in *Equus* have led some critics to see *Equus* as a satire on modern psychiatry. I think this is too narrow a view. Schaffer makes it clear in the Introduction to the play that he has no intention of lampooning psychiatry or psychiatrists. If psychiatry comes in for criticism in his play, it is because psychiatry has become our society's chosen tool for looking into the depths of the human soul. Schaffer's target is society in general, and the restraints it places on us.

In *Equus*, Schaffer asserts that our culture, with its rigid insistence on literalism and reductionist materialism, has tried to kill the symbols that transcendence requires for an outlet.

Schaffer has written a play that probes deeply into the shaky foundations of modern secular society. Unfortunately, through the hamhanded attentions of director Sidney Lumet, the incisive play has been transmuted into a sensational movie that is just one more expression of the society Schaffer is criticizing. Lumet easily succumbed to *Equus'* rich potential for lurid sex and violence. Moreover, during some of Dysart's most subtle and important monologues, Lumet chooses to distract us with all sorts of diverting visual images. Nor does Richard Burton's rather sloppy performance as Martin Dysart help matters. Peter Firth is quite good, though. He played the part of Alan Strang in the original stage version, and he plays Alan with a sort of eldritch, inarticulate intensity that suits the part perfectly.

Lumet's movie is a sorry substitute for the play. But, if you can't see the play, the importance of Schaffer's themes makes the movie worth seeing. Try to read the play first, though; it clarifies points that are left obscure in the film. There is some sex and some violence in the film, but I don't think this should dissuade adults from seeing it. Ultimately, *Equus* is an indictment of our society's inability to deal with a direct relationship between the individual and divinity; the importance of this problem to modern Latter-Day Saints makes Schaffer's play especially valuable.

Ron Bitton